International Mobile Equipment Identify (IMEI) number or with all Zeroes IMEI, with immediate effect, vide Notification Number 112 (RE-2008)/ 2004-2009, dated 16th June 2009 issued by Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Further, Department of Telecom has issued directions to all Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (CMTS)/Unified Access Service (UAS) Licensees to make provision of Equipment Identification Register (EIR) in their network so that calls without IMEI or that with all zeroes are not processed and rejected after 30th June 2009.

Landline Telephones

589. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) by when the Government plans to cover all the villages in the country by landline telephones; and

(b) whether Government would encourage private telephone operators to put up landlines in different parts of the country with a condition that they must cover rural and remote areas including border areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT): (a) Government has planned to provide Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in all the uncovered villages in the country, as per Census 2001, by February, 2011. These VPTs may either be on landline or Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) or Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) etc.

(b) As per present policy of Unified Access Service Licences (UASL), there is no roll out obligation for Private Basic Service Operators (PBSOs) to provide telephones in rural areas. However, USO Fund is being extensively deployed for providing subsidy support to increase the penetration of telecom for provision of telecom facilities in rural areas. Apart from Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), PBSOs are also participating in various schemes for provision of telecom facilities ia rural areas under subsidy support of USOF through bidding process.

Software Aayusoft

†590.SHRI RAGHUNANDAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has made investment in the software "Aayusoft" developed by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), Pune;

(b) if the answer to the "a" above is a 'yes' the amount invested therein;

(c) total amount spent by CDAC on the development of 'Aayusoft'; and

(d) whether it would not be appropriate that Government provide the entire amount spent on development of 'Aayusoft' to CDAC as grant, and make 'Aayusoft' available to common people for free on the internet?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SACHIN PILOT): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government provided partial support of Rs.190 lakhs for development of 'Aayusoft' software to CDAC.

(c) C-DAC has spent about Rs.230 lakhs so far.

(d) 'Aayusoft' is a decision support system primarily meant for use by Physicians or Research Institutes with Out Patient Departments, and not by common people.

Expansion of telecom services

591 SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that BSNL tenders for expansion of telecom services, relating to 2-G and 3-G, in various zones have been in the process of finalization for award of contract of successful bidders;

(b) if so, the details thereof, including bidders short-listed, if any, for award of contracts, zone-wise, indicating their antecedents especially if anyone was blacklisted in any country;

(c) whether Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) have expressed serious concern about the prospects of contracts covering sensitive zones going to Chinese bidders;

(d) if so, the nature of concern expressed by MHA; and

(e) the response of BSNL thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The tenders for procurement of 93 million lines for GSM equipment were floated by the four zones of BSNL on 01.05.2008. The tenders were further divided into four parts as detailed below:

(i) Part I for 2G elements, Core and VAS elements

(ii) Part II for 3G elements

(iii) Part III for infrastructure items

(iv) Part IV for operation and billing sub-systems.

Bids are still under evaluation and no award of contract has been done. For Part I and Part II, details are given in the Statement (*See* below). The bidders for Part III and Part IV are of Indian origin.

(c) and (d) Ministry of Home Affairs/Intelligence Bureau have raised concern over the presence of foreign companies, especially from certain countries in the critical and sensitive border areas, that may have national security implications. Accordingly, a security guideline was issued to BSNL.

(e) In compliance to the guidelines issued by Department of Telecom, the financial bids of M/s Huawei have not been opened by BSNL in West and East Zones.